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ABSTRACT

Intended to document the change in attitudes toward adults (parents and teachers) reading aloud to children since the late 1950s and to determine if the practice is strongly correlated to early fluency for young readers, this annotated bibliography also provides a research review, makes recommendations for reading aloud to children, and lists additional references. Titles of the chapters in the bibliography are as follows: (1) "Statement of the Problem"; (2) "Purpose of the Study"; (3) "Organization of the Study"; (4) "Limitations of the Study"; (5) "Definition of Terms"; (6) "Search for an Answer: The Early Studies"; (7) "Discovery: Durkin and Clark"; (8) "Replication and Validation"; (9) "Extension and Explanation"; (10) "Application: In School"; (11) "Application: At Home"; (12) "Application: Preschool and Afterschool"; (13) "Application: Repetition"; (14) "The Affective Domain"; (15) "Summary"; (16) "Conclusions"; and (17) "Recommendations." Fifty-eight references and background information on the author conclude the bibliography. (SKC)

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An Annotated Bibliography of the Literature Examining the Importance of Adults Reading Aloud to Children

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Study Directed

by

Charles R. DuVall, Ph.D.

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the course E591--Exit Project
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An Annotated Bibliography of the Literature
Examining the Importance of Adults
Reading Aloud to Children

A study was begun by Durkin in 1958 which would not only alter the educational world's view of reading readiness but would also discover for the first time that a relationship existed between adults reading aloud to children and these children's later success in school. The year 1958 "was part of an era in which the schools generally discouraged early home help with reading, and in which parents were warned that preschool help would lead to problems of confusion, or of boredom, when school instruction began" (Children Who Read Early 68).

According to Durkin, it was established in the early 1900's that children would begin first grade at six years of age, that they would then be prepared to read, and that reading instruction would begin when they were sufficiently prepared, which might be as late as the second semester of first grade (Children Who Read Early 5). She went on to say that for the first half of the

century, and even into the 1950's, the educational world continued to "focus on maturation, mental age and readiness testing" (Children Who Read Early 9).

How then could Midge, who entered first grade in 1957 with no formal reading instruction and who was too young physically and mentally to read and who had not been tested for reading readiness, be reading at the fourth grade level? (Children Who Read Early 1) Determined to see if there were other "Midges" in first grade and, if so, how they learned to read in the face of educational theory, Durkin began a study of early readers in Oakland, California.

In 1959, she published preliminary results of the study which had begun in the fall of 1958 and would terminate in June of 1964. She had identified forty-nine children who were reading before entering first grade! Her data indicated that while I.Q. and socioeconomic class did not correlate significantly with their reading achievement, all of the early readers had been read aloud to extensively at home, had books of their own, had parents who had answered their literacy-related questions and had been provided with writing materials (Children Who Read Prior to First Grade 112).

Frustrated because she did not have a control group and so could not determine if non-readers shared these same home factors, Durkin began a concurrent study in New York in which she again identified early readers. This time she also assembled a control group matched with the readers for I.Q., sex, socioeconomic class and first grade teacher (Children Who Read Early 77). The findings closely matched the findings of the California study; while I.Q., sex and socioeconomic class were not significant, every early reader had been read aloud to, had had his literacy-related questions answered, had had parents who read for pleasure and had been provided with writing materials.

In 1966 Durkin published Children Who Read Early Two Longitudinal Studies. In it she summarized her findings, which were contrary to the prevalent educational theory of the time. She announced that her findings showed that there was "no simple connection between early reading and the socioeconomic status of a family (136). She stated that instead of the socioeconomic class, the significant family feature was "the presence of parents who spend time with their children, who read to them; who answer their questions and their requests for help; and who demonstrate in their own lives that reading is a rich source of relaxation, information and contentment" (136).

This study of the literature examining the benefits of adults reading aloud to children revealed that the literature actually began with Durkin's first publication in 1959. Earlier published studies were very few in number and had touched on reading aloud only obliquely. With Durkin the focus changed from I.Q. and socioeconomic backgroud to home background literacy activities, and the amount of research activity studying the effects of adults reading aloud to children mushroomed.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Starting in the late 1950's, researchers studying early and fluent readers began discovering that certain home background attributes correlated very highly with early, fluent or good readers. These attributes included parents who answered their children's questions about literacy, who provided them with books of their own, who took them to the library to check-out books, who provided their children with writing materials and who, themselves, read for pleasure. However, the factor which began to appear which correlated most highly with the kinds of readers that schools would like to develop was that these readers had been read aloud to often by others -- usually adults, or adults in conjunction with

siblings or other older children. Studies over the past thirty years have consistently shown that adults reading aloud to children positively affected or correlated highly with children's reading ability in both the cognitive and affective domains.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

"The elementary school must assume as its sublime and most solemn responsibility the task of teaching every child in it to read" (Bennett 21). Yet last year American elementary students spent only about half the calendar year in school and only a small portion of each school day was allocated to the study of reading. Clearly, educators needed reliable data regarding effective, efficient ways of teaching reading in order to accomplish the task of teaching every child to read in such a limited amount of time. Therefore, a comprehensive review of the literature has been made to determine if adults reading aloud to children has had a very strong, positive correlation with early fluent readers, with improvement in language skills and with children who like to read.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Because of the quantity of the research studies, the annotated bibliography has been divided into six major sections. The studies have been arranged in chronological order within each section and subsection. The first major division was called Search for an Answer: The Early Studies. These were published between 1950 and 1960 and included Durkin's landmark publication in 1959. When it was discovered that the main body of research dated from Durkin's 1959 study, an arbitrary decision was made not to include the tangentially related studies published prior to 1950. A review of these six studies may be found in Children Who Read Early, pages 9-12.

The second major section, called Discovery: Durkin and Clark, introduced the two researchers on whose extensive and intensive studies most of the research examining the benefits of adults reading aloud to children was based -- Durkin and, ten years later, Clark. The third major section, Replication and Validation, cited eleven studies which undertook to reproduce the Durkin and Clark work in different settings and with different populations to see if the findings could be replicated and thus, over a period of time, validated. The next section, Extension

and Explanation, included the work of researchers who undertook studies to explain and analyze the findings of Durkin and Clark and extend them to populations other than preschool readers. The studies in the fourth section examine why adults reading aloud to children appeared to correlate highly with reading interest, reading achievement and success in school.

Studies in the fifth major section, Application, examined the results of applying Durkin and Clark's findings. It was divided into four parts: (1) studies which examined the benefits of programs of reading aloud in school, (2) studies which examined the benefits of programs which taught parents who had not been reading aloud to their children to start reading aloud to them, (3) studies which examined the benefits of having providers of child care in a preschool or after school setting read aloud to children, and (4) studies which examined the benefits of repeated oral reading of the same book to the same child or children.

The final section, The Affective Domain, included studies which dealt exclusively with the relationship between reading aloud by adults to children and their feelings and values. Other studies reported informal affective results as a result of the research, but these four made the affective domain their focus.

Several longitudinal studies were reported a number of times during the research. These published reports were termed preliminary or interim reports. With the exception of Durkin, the preliminary studies were not included in this paper. Only the final reports were included. Durkin's preliminary studies were so immediately cited by other researchers -- Plessas and Oakes, page 241, for example -- that they were included. Her first preliminary report was included as part of the annotations because it influenced future researchers before her 1966 results were published. Other preliminary Durkin reports were included in the bibliography.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While an attempt was made to make the annotated bibliography comprehensive, no claim was made for completeness. First of all, only research studies were included -- which excluded a large body of opinion papers, program descriptions, philosophical papers, and other published material related to the topic of the benefits of adults reading aloud to children. Secondly, a few of the related research studies in the form of unpublished doctoral

dissertations or unpublished papers were not available in the three-month research time-frame.

In an attempt to keep the annotations strictly on the subject of the benefits of adults reading aloud to children, two related areas were excluded: studies written prior to 1950 and studies examining the effects of improved listening skills on the academic achievement of children. These studies frequently employed reading aloud as a tool to teach various listening skills, but the focus was on the skills and the results, not the tool.

Finally, the research articles were included in the bibliography because they related to the topic, not because a critical analysis of the research methods and results was done. Taken individually, the validity of some of the results may be questioned by statistical experts. Durkin, for example, questioned some of the statistical methods or results of Shapiro and Willford, Sutton (1969) and King and Frieson in Durkin's 1974-75 article ("A Six Year Study of Children" 55-57). It was hoped, however, that the quantity, consistency and duration of the body of research on this topic negated the statistical weaknesses of a few of the researchers.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

children's literature -- "all printed material available for the use of children" (Good 342).

comprehension -- "The act of understanding the meaning of printed or spoken language as contrasted with the ability to perceive and pronounce words without reference to their meaning" (Good 123).

early reading -- "Reading skills developed before a child enters school and receives systematic and formal teaching" (Good 474).

fluency -- "Smoothness and rapidity in reading, uninterrupted by failures in recognition or other faults" (Good 246).

i.t.a. -- "Initial teaching alphabet. An augmented alphabet of 44 characters, each symbol representing one speech sound; designed by Sir James Pittman and used largely in the early stages of reading instruction" (Good 26).

literacy -- "strictly, the bare ability to read and write and more broadly, the ability to read and write at the level of the average 4th grade pupil" (Good 342).

mental age (MA)-- "The level of intellectual development expressed as equivalent to the chronological age at which the average child attains that level; the term should be interpreted in

terms of a specified mental test and is not appropriate for use with adults" (Good 20).

picture book -- "A book for children, with very little or no text, which relies on pictures to tell the story" (Good 68).

picture story book -- "A book for young children in which the pictures are closely related to the text and contribute largely to the presentation of the total content" (Good 68). This term is frequently shortened to story book in the context of this bibliography.

readiness -- "Willingness, desire, and ability to engage in a given activity, depending on the learner's level of maturity, previous experience, and mental and emotional set" (Good 472).

reading readiness -- "Attainment of the levels of interest, experience, maturity, and skills which enable the learner to engage successfully in a given reading task; often used to indicate the preparedness of a child for beginning formal reading instruction" (Good 472).

reading readiness activities -- "Activities which prepare a child to learn to read, such as storytelling, speech development, and vocabulary development" (Good 9). In the context of this bibliography, a major reading readiness activity was reading aloud to children.

reading readiness test -- "A test used to determine whether pupils have attained sufficient maturity to begin the study of reading (may include tests of vocabulary, visual and auditory discrimination, and motor coordination" (Good 601).

socioeconomic background -- "The background or environment indicative of both the social and economic status of an individual or group" (Good 542).

traditional orthography -- "The usual 26-letter alphabet as distinguished from modified alphabets" (Good 404) such as the i.t.a.

ANNOTATIONS

Search for an Answer: The Early Studies

Milner, Esther. "A Study of the Relationship Between Reading Readiness in Grade-One School Children and Patterns of Parent-Child Interaction." Child Development 22.2 (June 1951): 95-112.

This study, like most of the studies before Durkin, rested on the assumption that differences in reading achievement were related to social class. Milner tested all the first grade children in three schools -- an upper class private school, a middle class public school and a public school in a "blighted" neighborhood -- and arrived at a language I.Q. score. Her study group was composed of the twenty-one highest and lowest scorers. The parents of these children were interviewed and results compiled to show that the lower class children lacked a warm positive family atmosphere and "an extensive opportunity to interact verbally with adults of high personal value to the child and who possess adequate speech patterns" (111).

Hidden in the compilation of data were the findings that high-scoring children had more books available to them and they were read to by adults. She recommended smaller (than 40 or 50) first grade classes and teachers who build warm interpersonal relationships with children and provide opportunities to explore picture books.

Sheldon, William D., and Lawrence Carrillo. "Relation of Parents, Home, and Certain Developmental Characteristics to Children's Reading Ability." Elementary School Journal 52 (1952): 262-70.

Sheldon and Carrillo studied 868 students in grades one through twelve from eight central New York schools with the intention of identifying characteristics of good and poor readers in order to teach reading more adequately. Four areas were studied: intelligence; personal and emotional adjustment; reading ability; and a general category including vision, health, teacher, environmental and parental evaluations. Buried in the masses of information compiled was the statistic that "as the number of books in the home increases, the percent of good readers increases and the percent of average and poor readers decrease" (265). It was suggested that this was possible because homes with books had "higher status" and perhaps higher intelligence of parents and, therefore, heredity. It was also noted that good readers came more often, but not exclusively, from parents with higher educational levels. Like Milner's, this study was based on the assumption that socioeconomic background determined reading achievement.

Irwin, Orvis C. "Infant Speech: Effect of Systematic Reading of Stories." Journal of Speech and Hearing Research 3.2 (June 1960): 187-90.

Irwin, like Milner, based his study on the assumption that socioeconomic factors were predictors of language deficient children. He prepared a study of thirty-four infants, twenty-four experimental and ten control. Although the study was based on the father's occupation, the mother was instructed to spend twenty minutes a day reading to the infant from picture books, pointing out and talking about the pictures. The control group was furnished with no books or instructions. The study was designed to show that systematic reading of stories to infants between thirteen and thirty months in working class families could result in an increase in the "amount of their phonetic production" (187) as determined by home visits. The results showed that from the thirteenth to the seventeenth month there was little difference but after the seventeenth month the experimental group consistently, increasingly and statistically significantly exceeded the control group. It still remained for Durkin to shift the emphasis from class to reading aloud.

Durkin, Dolores. "A Study of Children Who Learned to Read Prior to First Grade." California Journal of Educational Research 10.3 (May 1959): 109-13.

In 1959 with the publication of this article Durkin shifted the research emphasis from socioeconomic status to descriptions of early readers. She had begun a longitudinal study in the fall of 1958 and this was the first of several interim reports before her final report, Children Who Read Early, in 1966. She identified forty-nine first graders during the first week of school from a population of 5,103 in Oakland, California, who met her definition of preschool reader. Preliminary review of her data indicated that factors such as I.Q. and socioeconomic background simply did not correlate significantly with early reading ability like being read aloud to and owning story books. "All of the children. . . had been read to extensively before entering school and had storybooks of their own ranging in number from five to approximately two hundred" (112). Studies from this time on would be influenced by Durkin's research.

Discovery: Durkin and Clark

Durkin, Dolores. Children Who Read Early Two Longitudinal Studies. New York: Columbia University, 1966.
"The First Study: Oakland, California" pages 13-58.

This study was designed to see if children were learning to read before first grade, what effect preschool reading would have on school progress and what factors may have contributed to early reading. The study ran from September 1958 to June 1964 and involved 5103 children in sixty-one schools. From tests performed in the first two weeks of school, forty-nine readers were identified. Findings indicated that achievement of these students after six years in school was significantly higher than equally bright classmates who had not been early readers. Early readers came from a wide I.Q., socioeconomic and race range. The most significant findings from the home studies were that all forty-nine had been read aloud to from an early age, owned story books and most could print. In addition a significant number of parents were self-described as avid readers. Because the lack of a control group did not permit study of non-readers with similar I.Q. and socioeconomic backgrounds, a concurrent study was begun in 1961.

Durkin, Dolores. Children Who Read Early Two Longitudinal Studies. New York: Columbia University, 1966.
"The Second Study: New York City" pages 67-118.

The second study was designed with a control group so that comparison could be made between early readers and non-readers carefully matched by sex, I.Q., socioeconomic class and first grade teacher. The study took place in New York City. Forty schools with a population of 5000 first grade students chosen to represent different socioeconomic classes yielded 156 readers. Thirty were randomly selected to be matched with a non-reading control. Achievement by the early readers was significantly greater at the end of first grade and increased over the three year period. Other significant findings from the home interviews were that every early reader had been read aloud to by parents who described themselves as reading more than average adults and who used the library a great deal. The mother was found to be the most influential person on early readers and more mothers of early readers had completed college and felt they had time to answer their children's literacy questions. The non-readers had not been read to as often and their literacy questions had not been answered. The most frequent reason for not reading and answering was "too busy".

Clark, Margaret M. Young Fluent Readers. London: Heinemann Educational Books, Ltd., 1976. Pages 9-18 and 39-56.

Thirty-two children between the ages of 4½ and 6½ from three cities in Scotland were identified as reading fluently (second grade or above) before entering school. They were tested extensively, their home backgrounds explored and their progress in school followed in detail to try to determine factors that might help other children become fluent readers. Clark refers to similarities between her study and Durkin's Children Who Read Early: "In a surprising number of ways this present group of children were similar to those in Durkin's studies in spite of the fact that hers took place in the United States with an older age group of children and with a different criterion with regard to reading level" (10).

Factors which were not significant included age, sex, I.Q., socioeconomic class, size and position in family, ease or difficulty of birth and health. What was significant was that they were all read aloud to, had parents who answered their literacy questions, had parents who read for pleasure themselves and most were frequent library users.

Replication and Validation

Plessas, Gus P., and Clifton R. Oakes. "Prereading Experiences of Selected Early Readers." Reading Teacher 17 (Jan. 1964): 241-45.

Plessas and Oakes were directly influenced by Durkin's October 1961 interim report (241) and set up a study to see if her results could be replicated. They wanted to identify "the nature of prereading activities that might be associated with early success in reading" (241). Twenty students from the twenty-two elementary schools in San Juan, CA, reading at second grade level or better in Dec. of their first grade year were tested and studied. Nine families were working class, eleven were professional. The most significant statistic was that "all the children were read to extensively. Daily reading was provided for 19 of the children at home and at least 5 children were read to several times a day" (243). Also significant was that these children had someone at home, usually a parent but sometimes a sibling, who answered their questions about letters, words and numbers. Most could write their own names and copy words before first grade.

Brzeinski, Joseph E. "Beginning Reading in Denver." Reading Teacher 18 (Oct. 1964): 16-21.

Brzeinski reported on two studies of pilot projects in Denver inspired by Durkin's observation that some children come to first grade reading. Nine thousand Denver kindergartners were divided into sixty-one control and sixty-one research classes. The research kindergartners received twenty minutes of reading readiness activitie every day. When they entered first grade, the children were divided in four groups: regular kindergarten, regular later grades; regular kindergarten, adjusted later grades; research kindergarten, regular later grades; research kindergarten, adjusted later grades. Children were found to benefit from the kindergarten program and to remember the skills over the summer. Pilot kindergarten children scored significantly better at the end of first grade with optimum progress being made by those whose first grade programs took advantage of gains made in kindergarten.

At the same time a parallel study to determine how effectively parents could prepare preschool children for reading was carried out using two research groups and a control. The research parents were taught beginning reading skills to use daily. Reading aloud to the child was found to have a significant effect whether the child was in a research or a control group. Maximum effect occurred with reading aloud plus readiness skills.

Sutton, Marjorie Hunt. "Readiness for Reading at the Kindergarten Level." Reading Teacher 17 (Jan. 1964): 234-40.

Influenced by two Durkin interim reports (Jan. 1961 and Dec. 1962) (234), researchers tested 134 kindergartners at Anthony School, Muncie, IN, for reading readiness. Only two were found not ready to read. Since readiness was apparent, an easy reading book corner was added to the room for anyone interested but with no attempt to discourage or encourage its use. Testing after four months revealed forty-six children reading at first grade level or better. To see if Durkin's findings about early readers and non-readers related to the Muncie kindergartners, the parents of all 134 were given a questionnaire. As in Durkin's studies, there was a wide range of socioeconomic background yet little or no difference was found to exist between home background factors of the reading children as opposed to non-readers. Those factors which were significant were that the readers: (1) were read aloud to oftener and at a "decidedly" earlier age, (2) asked more questions about words, letters and numbers, and (3) had parents who were interested in the child's school progress.

Sutton, Marjorie Hunt. "First Grade Children Who Learned to Read in Kindergarten." Reading Teacher 19 (Dec. 1965): 192-96.

This study was a follow-up of Sutton's 1964 report. The reading progress of the 134 kindergartners was followed in first grade to see if the forty-six who learned to read in kindergarten suffered the frequently predicted set-backs or problems of confusion or boredom in first grade. The opposite proved true. The readers entered first grade with a seven month advantage over their classmates. By the end of the first semester they were nine months ahead and by June, ten months ahead.

Sutton, Marjorie Hunt. "Children Who Learned to Read in Kindergarten: A Longitudinal Study." Reading Teacher 22 (April 1969): 595-602, 683.

This report followed the kindergartners studied in Sutton 1964 and 1965 through grade three. The reading achievement of the forty-six kindergartners who scored 1.3 or higher in kindergarten was measured at the end of each semester and compared with that of Group B, the fifty-nine children who did not score on the kindergarten test, and Group C, children who moved into the district after kindergarten. Her results showed that "children who achieved a measure of reading ability in kindergarten had a continuing and increasing reading advantage over their classmates throughout the pirmary grades" (602). By the end of third grade, Group A children were reading at a grade level eighteen months beyond Group B and sixteen months beyond Group C. Group A were the children from the first study who had been read aloud to oftener and at a "decidedly" earlier age than Group B.

King, Ethel M., and Doris T. Friesen. "Children Who Read in Kindergarten." The Alberta Journal of Educational Research 18.3 (Sept. 1972): 147-161.

King and Friesen identified thirty-one readers from the Calgary, Canada, kindergarten population of 4,282. Thirty-one children who could not read were randomly selected as a comparison group. The students were tested and their parents questioned to see if each group could be differentiated by thirteen factors including sex, age, intelligence, vocabulary, and home backgrounds and learning experiences. They were tested again at the end of grade one. The children's home background data were surprisingly similar. Of the readers twenty-one were read to frequently, five often, five seldom; the nonreaders had twenty-one read to frequently, three often and seven seldom. Nineteen early readers but only eleven nonreaders used the public library. These researchers found the education level of the mother, but not the father, statistically significant in identifying early readers. The early readers were significantly better readers than the nonreaders after one year of instruction. King and Friesen traced their work back to Durkin's 1966 book, Children Who Read Early, calling it "the most important research on early readers" (148).

Briggs, Chari and David Elkind. "Cognitive Development in Early Readers." Developmental Psychology 9.2 (1973): 279-80.

Briggs and Elkind's pilot study tested sixteen matched pairs of five year old readers and nonreaders and interviewed their parents. Significant findings were that mothers of early readers had more education and were at a higher occupational level than nonreaders' mothers, fathers of early readers read to their children significantly more often than fathers of non-readers and many of the early readers had an older sibling or friend read to them often. This study was followed by an expanded study whose results were released in 1977.

Briggs, Chari and David Elkind. "Characteristics of Early Readers." Perceptual and Motor Skills 44 (June 1977): 1231-37.

In this expanded study thirty-three white early readers (chosen using Durkin's criteria) and their matched controls were given a battery of tests and their parents filled out questionnaires. One of the aims was to "get a more detailed picture of early readers and their families than that provided by. . . Durkin, 1966" (1231). Significant findings included that readers came from higher socioeconomic families, that parents of readers took their children to the library significantly more often, read to them more often and made available more reading material to them. A new finding was that early reading might have been more related to parental interest in reading than to a child's interest in reading.

Wells, Gordon. "Some Antecedents of Early Educational Attainment." British Journal of Sociology of Education 2.2 (1981): 181-200.

This was a general compilation of a longitudinal study of thirty-two children in Australia who were studied by means of tests, home observations, parental interviews and teacher assessments from age one to age seven. A major finding was that while there was little relation between oral language and socioeconomic class, there was a strong association between literacy and class. Another, related factor was that the strongest single predictor of educational attainment was the Test of Knowledge of Literacy. Success on this test depended on the extent to which parents stimulated interest in reading, provided the child with books and answered his literacy questions. Children who did well in school were familiar with written language and this familiarity was "associated with the place and value of literacy in the everyday life of the parents" (198).

Wells, Gordon. "Story Reading and the Development of Symbolic Skills." Australian Journal of Reading 5.3 (1982): 143-53.

Using the same data base described in Wells, 1981, Wells studied the factors which correlated most highly with the educational attainment of thirty-two seven year olds on whom his associates had been gathering data since age one. He first determined the level of attainment, then reviewed all the data collected for correlations. Of all variables, one stood out as a predictor of attainment: knowledge of and interest in literacy. Wells then searched all transcripts for references to literacy events and found listening to stories read aloud the only variable which correlated strongly with all measures of school success.

Wells concluded that listening to stories was particularly influential because it helped children learn to use language symbolically. He wrote that although spoken language occurred in a context which supported meaning, written language must create its own context using symbols alone (147). Wells concluded that while listening to stories probably contributed to simple language skill acquisition (like new vocabulary), its greatest benefits were to be found in complex skill development.

Feitelson, Dina and Zahava Goldstein. "Patterns of Book Ownership and Reading to Young Children in Israeli School-oriented and Nonschool-oriented Families." Reading Teacher 39 (May 1986): 924-30.

Feitelson wanted to see if Durkin and Clark's findings held true for Israel so she studied the families of 102 kindergartners, half from schools in neighborhoods where students did well in school and half from schools in neighborhoods where children did poorly. She found that the high attaining children owned 2,774 books while the low attaining owned only 243 and sixty-one percent of the low attaining had none at all. Also, many of the 243 appeared to be family books, not story books. All children in the school-oriented homes were read to daily and forty-five percent reported reading for half an hour or more daily. Sixty-one percent of the nonschool-oriented children were not read to at all and an additional twenty-four percent were read to only "sometimes". Also, in the school-oriented families "in no case was a book ever read only once" (927) and every parent reported answering questions and clarifying while reading aloud. Half of the school-oriented families began reading to the child before the age of two and eighty-six percent before the age of three. She concluded "in both societies there appears to be a correlational link between exposure to storybook reading and school attainment" (928). Twenty years after Durkin and ten years after Clark, their findings were still dominating the research.

Extension and Explanation

Fodor, Eugene Michael. "The Effect of the Systematic Reading of Stories on the Language Development of Culturally Deprived Children." Diss. Cornell University 1966.

In one of the first studies to apply Durkin's finding that reading aloud was related to language scores, Fodor set up an experimental group/control group study to examine the effects of daily reading aloud to twenty-four culturally deprived children between twenty-one and thirty months of age. Language development was tested and the experimental group demonstrated language gains which were greater than the control group exhibited at the .001 level.

Shapiro, Bernard J., and Robert E. Willford. "I.t.a. -- Kindergarten or First Grade?" Reading Teacher 22 (Jan 1969): 307-11.

Based on Durkin's study of early readers, this study was begun in 1965 to determine the relative reading and spelling achievement of two i.t.a. (initial teaching alphabet) groups, one of which began its formal reading program in kindergarten and one in first grade. There was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of I.Q. At the end of the first year the "kindergarten" group (now first graders) outperformed the "first grade" group (now second graders) in all the tests and these differences were statistically significant. At the end of the "kindergarten" group's second grade year, the differences were greater than they were at the end of the first grade year and the differences were large enough to be statistically significant. The researchers concluded that these advantages were a "possible but not inevitable" (311) result of an earlier start in an i.t.a. program.

Chomsky, Carol. "Stages in Language Development and Reading Exposure." Harvard Educational Review 42.1 (1972): 1-33.

In an often cited study, Chomsky studied the language acquisition patterns of thirty-six children between age six and ten. The study was divided into two parts: part one dealt with the study of the patterns. Part two examined the relationship between the children's stage of language acquisition and their exposure at home to both written and spoken language. One of several factors found to correlate positively, strongly and consistently with advanced linguistic stages was being read to by others. ". . . those prereaders in higher linguistic stages are read to by more people and hear more books per week, at higher complexity levels than children at lower linguistic stages" (27). Chomsky concluded that the value of her study was not in the patterns studied but in the correlations developed in the second part of the study and the resulting implications for educators and parents.

Fasick, Adele Mongan. "Televison Language and Book Language." Elementary English 50 (Jan. 1973): 125-30.

Fasick undertook this study to examine reasons why watching television did not seem to have the same beneficial effect on language development that being read aloud to did. Specifically, she wanted to see if there was a difference in the language used in the two media which caused it to affect or not affect children's attainment in school. She compared all the language used in three telvision programs and five children's picture books. She defined four types of sentences (incomplete; unexpanded simple and compound; expanded simple and compound; and complex) of increasing complexity and found that television used more incomplete and simple sentences while books used more complex structures in greater quantity. She concluded that "hearing the complicated language of storybooks, which utilizes most of the syntactic possibilities of English, may help children to understand and to use the more complicated language they will have to employ in school" (130). In addition she theorized that repeated readings helped children understand complex language which may not have been meaningful the first time through.

Ninio, Anat and Jerome Bruner. "The Achievement and Antecedents of Labelling." Journal of Child Language 5 (1978): 1-15.

In the introduction, Ninio and Bruner pointed out the importance of labelling (or naming people and objects) to the development of speech in a child. In a longitudinal study of one mother-infant dyad video-recorded during free play between the infant's eighth and eighteenth months, Ninio and Bruner chose to study book-reading "since it appeared to be the major activity in which labelling occurred" (3). They discovered "turn-taking in book-reading is nearly perfect from the start" (6). Only one percent of responses occurred simultaneously, rather than alternately. Another finding was that the mother based her words on a "constantly updated, detailed 'inventory' of the child's past exposure to objects and events, of the words he has previously understood, and of the forms of expression he has achieved" (10). They concluded that a central element in the achievement of labelling was mastery of reciprocal dialogue rules which book reading apparently stimulated.

Ferguson, Diana Marie. "The Effects of Oral Reading and Related Language Experiences on the Reading Readiness of Kindergarten Children." Diss. Univ. of Alabama 1979.

This study extended Durkin and Clark's work by considering the effects of listening to the reading of children's books and other related language experiences on kindergarten children who were tested and found to have low reading readiness scores. The children were divided into three groups matched for sex, race and age. The control group had a regular kindergarten experience. Group A was read stories daily. Group B was given a language experience daily including stories read aloud but also including puppet plays, filmstrips, tape recordings, creative dramatics and rewording stories in the children's own words. Experimental Group A experienced a significantly greater gain over Group B and the control group. There was no significant difference in gain between Group B and the control group. Again, reading aloud was related to academic gain, where related but oral experiences were not found to have a significant relation to an improvement in scores.

Heath, Shirley Brice. "What no Bedtime Story Means: Narrative Skills at Home and School." Language in Society 11.1 (Aug. 1982): 49-76.

Heath performed a comparative study of the early read-aloud experiences of three groups of families in the southeastern United States. She found that all three communities valued school success. However, only the Maintown preparation pattern seemed to predict success. The Roadville pattern allowed success mainly in the early grades. Trackton's preparation left students so deficient in basic skills that they could not catch up although they had good higher level skills.

Heath concluded that not only was early reading aloud important (Trackton parents did not read aloud to their children), but also that what was read aloud was important. Roadville parents provided simple books followed by simple stories which were simplified further by the reader who adapted them to short sentences and simple words. Maintown stories were read and discussed intact. Heath also concluded that teachers should be introduced to different cultural styles of child raising in order to help children succeed in school by maintaining their strengths while strengthening their weaknesses.

Morrow, Lesley Mandel. "Home and School Correlates of Early Interest in Literature." Journal of Educational Research 76.4 (Mar./Apr. 1983): 221-30.

This two part study was based on kindergarten children who showed reading interest rather than Durkin and Clark's early reading ability. The first part was a series of tests and observational techniques identifying children with high or low interest in literature from a population of 396 kindergartners. The result was fifty-eight children in each group. Although there were fifty-seven boys and fifty-nine girls, girls made up 67.2 percent of the high interest group and only 34.5 percent of the low. The results were similar to Durkin and Clark's studies of early readers. High literacy interest strongly correlated with home factors such as being read aloud to daily or oftener, owning books, using the library often, having educated parents who valued reading and being provided with writing materials. Some new findings were that rules regarding television viewing were more prevalent in the high-interest group, whether or not mothers worked did not affect interest in books, and the parents of both groups showed similar interest in sports. She recommended classroom teachers read aloud to low interest students and encourage parents to do the same.

Schickedanz, Judith A., and Maureen Sullivan. "Mom, What does U-F-F Spell?" Language Arts 61.1 (Jan. 1984): 7-17.

Schickedanz and Sullivan studied six children between the ages of 3½ and five for three months. They attended the same nursery school and were identified by their parents as having a high interest in literacy. The focus of the study was on literacy development in the home and in the nursery school. They found that story reading was the literacy event that occurred more than any other and that the majority of the events were child initiated. "The contrast between literacy events in the home and literacy events in the school was great" (11). There were few literacy events at school and the children seldom initiated them, even when their own parents were helping at school. They rarely asked literacy-related questions at school although they asked very many at home. The authors concluded that literacy developed at home. They recommended more literacy props for nursery school play and for the nursery school environment.

Fagan, William and Helen Hayden. "Reading Books with Young Children: Opportunities for Concept Development." Australian Journal of Reading 9.1 (March 1986): 11-19.

Acknowledging that reading to children relates to success in school, Fagan and Hayden tried to find specifics of book interactions and how they related to concept development. They asked five parents to read a story slightly altered to include concepts at three levels of labelling (general, basic and specific; furniture, chair, throne). They found that interaction generally took place at the basic and specific levels initiated by either parent or child and resulting in new concepts introduced or old ones extended. The parents seem to know what their children knew and built on this knowledge. "When the parents of this study read to their children, it seems that productive interaction takes place." (17) The researchers recommended that since reading aloud provided a situation conducive to concept development, teacher story reading should allow time for child interaction.

Application: In School

Cohen, Dorothy H. "The Effect of Literature on Vocabulary and Reading Achievement. Elementary English 45 (1968): 209-13, 217.

Cohen wanted to apply Durkin and Clark's findings to teachers reading daily to disadvantaged second graders in seven schools in New York City to see if this would help improve scores on language tests. There were 130 in the control group and 155 in the experimental. The books were carefully chosen according the three criteria, could be read as many times as the teacher or class wanted and were accompanied by a Manual of Accompanying Activities and Story-Reading Techniques. The Control group carried out a normal year. The experimental group showed statistically significant increases in vocabulary, word knowledge, quality of vocabulary and, particularly, reading comprehension (.001). There was no significant difference in word discrimination. Cohen concluded that daily reading, particularly to those who have not been read to at home increased comprehension, as well as "facility in listening, attention span, narrative sense, recall of stretches of verbalization and the recognition of new words in context" (217). Reading aloud "apparently affects basic, beginning stages of the transition that must take place in growth from comprehension of oral language to the use of symbols in reading" (213).

Porter, Edith Jane. "The Effect of a Program of Reading Aloud to Middle Grade Children in the Inner City." Diss. The Ohio State University 1969.

Porter trained twenty-one high school juniors to read aloud biweekly to fourth, fifth and sixth graders at several schools in inner city Columbus, Ohio. They were pre and posttested and discovered to have increased reading achievement and increased self concept. Porter tested 954 students, then divided them into control and experimental groups. The control group was not read to. Findings indicated that reading aloud increased both achievement and interest. Differences in comprehension and total reading were more significant than differences in vocabulary, differences in boys' scores were consistently greater than differences in girls' scores, and male readers were more influential than female readers. She recommended that teachers make time for reading aloud in the classroom since it contributed to both achievement, especially comprehension, and interest in reading.

Haskett, G. J., and William Lenfestey. "Reading-Related Behavior in an Open Classroom: Effects of Novelty and Modelling on Preschoolers." Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis 7.2 (Summer 1974): 233-41.

In an article pointing out some of the shortcomings of the open classroom concept, the authors reported a study of eight preschoolers and their reactions to three literacy events in their university preschool setting. Two were reading, one at the fifth grade level. During the initial observations of the fifteen minute free-play periods, all materials, including a book corner with twelve books, were available to any child. Observation recorded extremely infrequent reading-related behavior, even by those who could read. During the next five sessions a familiar adult entered the room carrying ten to fifteen new books and announcing that they would be in the reading center. Reading-related behavior increased in some but not all of the children. During the next five sessions, three adults picked up books, moved to defferent areas of the room and began reading aloud, neither encouraging nor discouraging listening. This was followed by five more "novel book" sessions followed by three more reading-aloud sessions. The children paid much more attention to books when the adults were reading aloud. Adult models were found the most effective stimulus of reading behavior both during their reading (listening) and following it (imitating).

Raftery, S. C. "The Effect of a Quality Literature Program Conducted by Elementary Education Majors on the Reading Achievement of Second Grade Students." Diss. New York University 1974.

Raftery used twelve volunteer third year undergraduate education students to read to twelve second grade classes. One group was read "quality" literature, one "regular" literature (defined as books available in the classroom), and one group was a control. Raftery found that both experimental groups, which were read aloud to three times a week, made significant gains on the posttest over the control group. However, there was no significant difference between the gains of the two experimental groups, the "quality" literature group and the "regular" literature group. She recommended keeping education students in elementary school classrooms as readers as part of their undergraduate degree work, suggesting such a plan would be beneficial not only to the young students' reading abilities, but also to the education students' skill and understanding of the entire reading program.

Lamme, Linda Leonard. "Reading Aloud to Young Children." Language Arts 53 (Nov./ Dec. 1976): 886-88.

Lamme videotaped sixty-three teachers of preschool, kindergarten, first and second graders in Florida. These tapes were analyzed by two coders using a preliminary Reading Aloud to Children Scale. Eight items were found to factor significantly with quality oral reading performance and were rated in importance, from most to least. The most important factor was child involvement in the story reading, followed by eye contact, oral expression, pointing to words and pictures, familiarity with the story, selection of the book, making sure everyone could see and hear, and highlighting the words and language of the story.

Weidner, Margaret Joanne. "A Study of the Effects of Teacher Oral Reading of Children's Literature on the Listening and Reading Achievement of Grade Four Students." Diss. Boston University 1976.

Weidner studied four fourth grade classrooms to see if reading aloud significantly affected reading comprehension and listening comprehension. She also studied whether student attitude toward reading and teacher oral reading was related to the students' reading comprehension and the students' listening comprehension. She found that the relationship between reading aloud and improved listening comprehension and reading comprehension was significant. The group read to most often (five days a week) showed the greatest gain. She also found that attitude toward reading, which was positive, did influence performance in the areas of listening and reading.

Hooper, Roslind C., and Victoria Chou Hare. "Measurable Effects of a Read-Aloud Program." Reading Horizons 2 (1982): 254-57.

After screening twenty-six average or above inner city students for exposure to circuses and testing their knowledge of circuses and finding it minimal, Hooper divided the students into two equal groups, a control group and a treatment group. She read aloud to the treatment group twice a week for eight weeks from the thirteen fiction and nonfiction public library books about circuses available in the classroom to both groups. The teacher also reacted orally with the students during the reading time. The control group performed the usual school routine: working on skills, watching filmstrips and visiting the library for stories (twice, but neither was about a circus.)

After the treatment, a posttest was administered revealing significant gains in circus-related knowledge, in maturity of language and in use of circus-appropriate vocabulary in the treatment group. The scores of the control group remained constant. Hooper mentioned that she was unable to measure but felt she should note a further result of the study, the enthusiasm of the treatment group of children for the program.

Feitelson, Dina, Bracha Kita and Zahaza Goldstein. "Effects of Listening to Series Stories on First Graders' Comprehension and Use of Language." Research in the Teaching of English 20 (Dec. 1986): 339-56.

Since sixty percent of Israeli parents did not read to their children and teacher oral reading was seldom done, the researchers wanted to see if a teacher reading aloud program would significantly affect student achievement. Five first grades (139 children) in a poor suburb of Haifa were the subjects. Three classes were randomly assigned to experimental status, the other two to control. The children were pretested, the experimental group was read to for the last twenty minutes of the day, five days a week, for six months and the children were then posttested. The results showed that the children who were read to had significantly better results on the comprehension and active use of language measures than did the control. Two unexpected results were that the experimental group outperformed the control in the test of technical reading and that more than half the children in the experimental group had asked for, received and were reading some of the books at home although they came from homes which previously did not have children's books and the series was generally not read by even middle class children until they were older.

Application: At Home

Highberger, Ruth, and Helen Brooks. "Vocabulary Growth of Head Start children Participating in a Mothers' Reading Program." Home Economics Research Journal 1.3 (March 1973): 185-87.

Highberger and Brooks did a pretest/posttest, experimental/control group study to see if parents of children in Head Start could raise their children's vocabulary growth by reading aloud to them. The mothers from one Head Start center were trained to read to and talk about the books with their children, given a book each week and asked to read to their children ten to fifteen minutes a day for seventeen weeks. Telephone and home checks encouraged them to follow the program. A second Head Start center in the same county served as a control. The control group was given the chance to check out toys from a circulating library each week. The gains in vocabulary growth of the experimental group over the control were significant at the .001 level. The authors concluded that "it is rather surprising that even with a minimum amount of direction, [one training session] these mothers in rural low-income families could have so much impact on the vocabulary growth of their children" (187).

Lengyel, Janice, and Marcia Baghban. "The Effects of a Family Reading Program and SSR on Reading Achievement and Attitudes." Educational Resources Information Center, 1980, ED 211 925.

In an attempt to encourage parents to read to children, a kindergarten-second grade elementary school developed a combined home reading and Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) program. Participants read to their children fiftenn minutes a day, seven days a week for nine weeks. To gather data, teachers administered a questionnaire to all the children in the building before and after the program. Parents participating in the program were sent two questionnaires, one before the program started and one after it ended. One month after the program started, West Virginia gave all students the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills and the reading scores of those in the family reading program were compared to those who were not. Results indicated that more family readers considered reading their favorite subject, did more reading at home and enjoyed SSR more than did nonparticipants. They also achieved higher scores after just a month in the program than did nonparticipants. The researchers hoped the benefits of the family reading program would accrue to siblings also.

Burgess, Joanne C. "The Effects of a Training Program for Parents of Preschoolers on the Children's School Readiness." Reading Improvement 19 (Winter 1982): 313-18.

The purpose of Burgess's study was to determine the effectiveness of parental training -- eight workshops -- on their children's language ability. Three groups of thirty children from the 200 who were to enter kindergarten in 1976, plus one or both parents, were established. One group, the experimental, was trained prior to their children's testing. One control group was trained after their children's testing and one was not trained but the children were tested. The first workshop was totally devoted to the importance of reading aloud and how to do it. The author notes that "books were vehicles throughout the workshop series for creating an atmosphere for enjoying literature and for developing readiness for later reading experiences" (314). Children in the experimental group scored significantly higher on both the reading readiness test and the language development test. Parents rated the program helpful and many indicated that they expected the benefits to extend to siblings of the prekindergartners.

Lamme, Linda Leonard, and Athol B. Packer. "Bookreading Behaviors of Infants." Reading Teacher 39.6 (Feb. 1986): 504-09.

Lamme and Packer wanted to know if reading to very young infants three months to a year old had any observable beneficial effects. They videotaped thirteen mothers reading four books to their infants and identified nineteen different types of infant behaviors. To verify the results, twenty other mothers were observed reading to their infants in their homes and two in-depth case studies of one boy and one girl from birth to one year were made. They found there were consistent visual, tactile, verbal and affective behaviors and developed a scale of infant reading behaviors so parents would know what to expect. They concluded that "infants who have been read to routinely greatly enjoy that experience and have learned a great deal about books, reading and language from their book reading experiences" (508).

Resnick, Michael B., et al. "Mothers Reading to Infants: A New Observational Tool." Reading Teacher 40 (May 1987): 888-94.

Resnick and six others created an observational tool for rating maternal book-sharing behaviors with infants as part of a larger, longitudinal study monitoring the physical and mental development of premature infants. The tool was developed from video tapes of fifty mother-infant pairs sharing books over a period of time. One hundred and sixteen episodes were then scored. Certain items were displayed consistently by high scorers. The researchers felt these could be recommended and taught to low-scoring mothers by teachers and others interested in the reading progress of children.

Application: Preschool and Afterschool

Durkin, Dolores. "A Language Arts Program for Pre-First-Grade Children: Two-Year Achievement Report." Reading Research Quarterly 5 (Summer 1970): 534-65.

As an outgrowth of her 1966 studies, Durkin attempted to develop a program of pre-first grade reading readiness. After advertisement in the newspapers, thirty-six children enrolled in the two year, pre-first-grade program. The children were extensively tested at the beginning of the program, at the end of the first and the second year and their parents were interviewed. None of the children were reading or writing at the onset. Most did not know either letters or numerals. Objectives were to make opportunities to learn to read available and to avoid pressuring any child to learn. The most consistent element was that the children were read to daily. By the end of the second year, the children knew their upper and lower case letters and numerals to fifty and could identify varying numbers of words -- in other words, were reading. Since this was the first known study of an attempt to teach four-year-olds to read in a group setting, no comparisons were made and Durkin refused to speculate whether the gains of these children were great, average or minimal.

Durkin, Dolores. "A Six Year Study of Children Who Learned to Read in School at the Age of Four." Reading Research Quarterly 10.1 (1974-75): 9-61.

Durkin continued her study of the children who participated in her two year language arts program through grade four. She provided extensive program and instructional description and criticism, along with extensive statistical analysis. The conclusion was that the reading achievement of the experiemntal subjects exceeded that of the control group (children who went to the regular one-year kindergarten) for each of the four years. This was despite total refusal by the principal and most teachers to build on the reading achievement of the experimental group. All children began first grade with the readiness program followed by the same preprimers, no matter how well they were reading. Although they finished the second grade basals in first grade, the high achievers were returned to the first level second grade basal at the beginning of second grade and this was repeated for third and fourth grade. In addition, high achievers were receiving only about ten minutes of teacher time per day while lower achievers received the other fifty. This trend also continued through grades three and four.

Howell, John F., and Theodora A. Sylvester. "Improving Reading Motivation." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Montreal, Canada, 1983.

This study investigated the effect of an after-school reading program on neighborhood children's reading achievement and motivation. The North End Community Center, in an attempt to meet the educational needs of neighborhood children, established a reading club and invited children referred by the teachers at a nearby school as reluctant readers. A book was read aloud for about ten minutes until an exciting part and then reading stopped and copies were distributed to the children to keep. Children were not told to read but that the story would be finished for them, if they wanted, at the next session. A rating scale was developed and given to the teachers who rated children at the time of recommendation and at the end of a ten week session. The ratings indicated that the children improved in both motivation and skill. An unexpected result was a large number of the children reading to their parents and siblings.

Prater, Norma Jean, et al. "Who's Reading to the Children?" Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. New Orleans, 1985.

After reviewing ways in which reading aloud to others has been shown to be beneficial, Prater surveyed parents of children in the nation-wide KinderCare Learning Centers to see if parents knew the value of reading aloud, if they were doing it and what they were reading aloud. She analyzed 444 returns, which represented a 28.6 percent return rate.

Prater found that more than seventy percent of the three, four, and five year-olds were spending more than forty hours per week at KinderCare. Despite the limited time these children spent with their parents, the responding parents were aware of the value of reading aloud and 83.4 percent indicated reading aloud several times a week or more. However, a great majority read books purchased in grocery stores. When asked to indicate which characters from literature their children could recognize, the results were low, ranging from five to sixty-four percent, with the majority under twenty percent. Prater concluded that child care centers were in a position to educate both children and parents to the value of reading aloud and to good literature.

Application: Repetition

Hoffman, Darlene Haffner. "Ten Days With Inga and In the Night Kitchen: An Episode in Language Development." Communication Education 25.1 (Jan. 1976): 1-15.

Hoffman attempted, through a case study, "to describe and analyze the interaction and language processes which transpired between a child and her parents" (2) as they read a new book. The child was three years and three months old, and described as linguistically advanced. The new book was In the Night Kitchen. The book was read once to introduce it and then at Inga's request (ten times). Each reading was recorded and analyzed. Results included that she became more verbally active in the reading process as she became more familiar with the book, that she could both repeat and explain parts of the book in her own words, and that her speech was affected by the language of the book. The author concluded that she also demonstrated positive reactions to the book, to reading and to language which she attended more carefully when it came from a book than when it was spoken spontaneously. She also concluded that repeated readings were necessary for these results to take place.

Beaver, Joetta M. "Say it! Over and Over." Language Arts 59.2 (Feb. 1982): 143-48.

In an informal study, Beaver recorded her twenty-two first graders' reactions to the book Say It (Zolotow. NY: Greenwillow, 1980) to determine if interaction increased with repeated readings. After the first reading, no one looked at the book and there was one instance of one child using a word from the book. One week later the book was read again after a brief review. Again no one read it during silent reading. One week later the book was reread and some of the descriptive words listed on the board although most children could not read them. At this point the children began choosing this book each day at silent reading and it was selected by one child as his favorite. After the fourth reading, the class was asked to do a painting of their favorite parts of the book and then to write about the painting. Beaver included samples to demonstrate how much of the book's distinctive descriptive language shows up in the writing. All the children were able to use at least one word from the book at this point. Beaver concluded that the repeated readings resulted in greatly increased child interaction with this book.

Martinez, Miriam, and Nancy Roser. "Read it Again: The Value of Repeated Readings During Storytime." Reading Teacher 38 (April 1985): 782-86.

Based partly on Beaver's informal study, Martinez and Roser studied preschoolers response to repeated readings of initially unfamiliar books in both the home setting and the school setting. The study included four home case studies of four and five year olds and two nursery school groups. They discovered four changes that occurred as children became increasingly familiar with a text: children talked more about the story when they were familiar with it; their talk changed form from questions to comments; they focused on different aspects of the story; and they indicated greater depth of understanding. The researchers concluded that repeated readings were important for language development and that these findings should be noted by teachers, librarians and parents who read aloud to young children.

Mason, George E., and William E. Blanton. "Story Content for Beginning Reading Instruction." Elementary English 48 (Nov. 1971): 793-96.

The purpose of this study was to identify and quantify the reading interests of preschool children. A sample of 180 children -- ages three, four and five -- representing "a normal national sample" (793) were asked in an interview these three questions: (1) Do you like to have stories read to you?, (2) What stories do you like to hear best?, and (3) What stories would you read if you could read all by yourself? Results indicated that almost all (171) liked to hear stories read to them and the vast majority could name a type of story they preferred. Most preferred fairy tales, animal stories, story books and books about machines. From the finding that most children wanted most to read the same stories they liked most to hear, the researchers concluded that educators should read aloud a story before using it for reading instruction.

Bruckerhoff, Charles. "What Do Students Say About Reading Instruction?" The Clearing House 51 (Nov. 1977): 104-07.

Bruckerhoff studied student reactions to reading related experiences to provide teachers with "some description of actual experiences -- both good and bad -- that helped to create the students' feelings about reading" (104). He distributed a questionnaire to 191 students (ten percent of a student body), a random cross-section of both sexes, all grades (10-12), all subject areas and all ability levels in a high school. He asked three questions: (1) What promoted your competence and interest in reading?; (2) What detracted from it?; and (3) Who, besides your teacher, helped you in reading? A major factor that students felt promoted reading was being read aloud to. Two that detracted were being forced to read aloud (or follow along while others read aloud) and book reports. Half the students identified family members, particularly the mother, as helping them in reading and many indicated that experiences in the library helped them enjoy reading. It is surprising how closely these findings resemble Durkin's 1966 findings, despite the dissimilarity in population and instrument for gathering information.

Berg-Cross, Linda, and Gary Berg-Cross. "Listening to Stories May Change Children's Social Attitudes." Reading Teacher 31 (March 1978): 659-63.

The Berg-Crosses wanted to find out if hearing story books that expressed values could influence young children to change their attitudes. In a pre/posttest, control/experimental group study, 120 white, middle class children between the ages of four and six were divided into five groups. The control groups heard a Potter story while the other groups heard value stories. The pre and posttest questions were asked in individual sessions and after each story an unrelated fifteen minute "filler" activity took place before the posttest. The control group showed little attitude change; the experimental group displayed much more positive attitudes after the story. Analysis showed this increase to be uniform across each of the four stories. The conclusion was that attitudes could be significantly changed by hearing a picture book that espoused different attitudes. The Berg-Crosses remarked that the size of the attitude shift was surprising, especially for children so young after just one reading. They suggested that parents and teachers take seriously the socializing aspects of the books they read aloud.

Mendoza, Alicia. "Reading to Children: Their Preferences." Reading Teacher 38 (Feb. 1985): 522-27.

Mendoza surveyed 520 elementary school children (kindergartners through sixth grade) to study if and how they like to be read aloud to. Ninety-five percent liked to be read to. Other findings included that mothers do most of the home reading and that reading aloud at home drops off sharply as children learn to read for themselves. All children preferred to be read to in groups both at home and at school. Children read to each other only "once in a while". Seventy-six percent liked to talk about a story after it was read, but they did not want the story interrupted by questions. Ninety-three percent wanted a chance to look at or reread a story that had been read aloud to them. Her results indicated that in addition to being related to success in school attainment, reading aloud was valued by children.

SUMMARY

In the 1950's only three studies related to reading aloud were published, but one of them -- Durkin's "A Study of Children Who Learned to Read Prior to First Grade" -- changed the perspective of later research in the field. Before Durkin, researchers like Milner, Irwin and Sheldon tried to establish or based their assumptions on socioeconomic background as a predictor of reading achievement or reading problems. In hindsight, foreshadowing of Durkin's reserach was hidden within the research of the fifties. Milner discovered that high achievers had more books available to them and that they were read to by adults. Sheldon and Carrillo noted that "as the number of books in the home increases, the percent of good readers increases and poor readers decrease" (265). Irwin, in 1960, was breaking away from the idea that socioeconomic class predicted success or problems. His study foreshadowed later findings that the mother does most of the home reading aloud and also the idea that any family, no matter what the socioeconomic background, could positively affect its children's language ability.

In 1959 Durkin published the first of a series of interim reports on young early readers and research on the benefits of

adults reading aloud to children from this point on would refer back to her. In 1966 she published the results of her two concurrent longitudinal studies, one on the West Coast and one on the East, although Plessas and Oakes, Brzeinski and Sutton were sufficiently influenced by her interim findings to base their research on them.

Durkin found that I.Q., socioeconomic background and race were much less important factors than home attributes. She claimed to be the first to study children who learned to read before they got to school and before they reached the commonly accepted age when children were supposed to be ready to learn to read. Because she had no control group in her first study and so did not know if the attributes she was finding of early readers were equally applicable to non-early readers, she started the second study in New York City. The results were similar to the California study, plus the control group of non-readers matched for I.Q., socioeconomic background and race indicated that her findings were consistent for early readers and were not the same for non-early readers. Durkin's most famous finding, that every one of the early readers in both studies had been read aloud to regularly and often at home, seemed to fire the

imagination of reading researchers. Studies like Milner's relating reading success and failure to class were only successful if the very highest class were compared with the very lowest. Durkin's study fit all the children in the middle classes, some of whom were successful students and some of whom were not. Researchers rushed to replicate her findings to see if this new theory held up under replication. Plessas and Oakes, crediting Durkin's 1961 interim report (241), set up a study to see if they could replicate her results. They did; all the early readers in Plessas and Oakes' study had been read to at home and came from homes with a literacy-oriented environment.

Brzeinski and Sutton each prepared studies to examine the later effects of moving readiness activities to kindergarten. Both found that children who learned to read in kindergarten did not suffer later set-backs in reading achievement. On the contrary, the advantage was maintained and increased throughout the duration of the studies.

Four other researchers -- King 1972, Briggs and Elkind 1973 and 1977, Wells 1981 and 1982, and Feitelson 1986 -- in six studies, duplicated Durkin's study in different parts of the country and the world (Canada, Australia and Israel). In each case Durkin's basic findings -- that a literate home environment,

especially one where reading aloud was a frequent occurrence, was a better predictor of school success than socioeconomic background, I.Q. and race and that early readers continued to maintain their early lead over their equally bright but non-early reading classmates -- were replicated. Additional information about the literate home environment was being compiled: the mother was more influential than the father. Her educational level correlated significantly with school success while his did not. Other factors consistently showing statistical significance in these studies were the number of children's books in the home, the presence of a person who answered the child's literacy questions, siblings or others who read to the child (in addition or, occasionally, in place of the parents) and a family which made frequent use of libraries.

In 1976, ten years after Durkin's book, Clark published a second very influential book entitled Young Fluent Readers. She identified thirty-two early, fluent (reading second grade or above before entering school) readers, tested and studied them extensively for two years (1971-73), then reported her findings in Young Fluent Readers. Clark compared her findings to Durkin's and found that, despite the differences in sample populations,

their findings were remarkably similar (10). All of Clark's early readers had been read aloud to, had parents who answered their literacy questions and who read for pleasure, and most were frequent library users. From this point on, most of the researchers cited both Durkin and Clark.

A second group of researchers looked for ways to extend Durkin and later Clark's findings to other situations and populations and to begin to explain why and how early reading aloud and a literacy-oriented home environment related to success in school. Fodor wanted to see if Durkin's findings could be extended to a group that had not been defined as a part of her studies, the culturally deprived. Shapiro and Willford started a first grade and a kindergarten on the same readiness program at the same time and found that those students who began preparation for reading earlier maintained their lead over the other group through the end of the study three years later. Chomsky studied the speech acquisition patterns of thirty-six children and then examined the relationship to their home literacy environments. Chomsky, too, found that being read aloud to had a strong correlation to the level of language acquisition.

In 1973 Fasick looked for ways to explain why reading aloud seemed to have a more significant effect on children's success in school than oral language. Ninio and Bruner found that book reading was an excellent stimulant for early language acquisition in infants. Ferguson wanted to see if a program of daily reading could improve the reading readiness scores of kindergartners who were found to have low readiness scores.

Extension and explanation continued into the 1980's with Heath's 1982 study of the early read-aloud experiences of three homogeneous, but very different communities. She found that the way each community viewed children, books and literacy did, indeed, correlate significantly with the later performance of their children in school. Morrow in 1983 tested children for early reading interest rather than early reading ability and found that, like Durkin and Clark's early readers, kindergarten children who showed early reading interest were being read aloud to at home, used the library frequently, owned books and had parents who read, who answered the children's literacy questions and who provided them with writing materials.

In 1984 Schickedanz and Sullivan found that children who showed a high interest in literacy at home did not exhibit this

interest in nursery school. They concluded that literacy develops at home but also recommended that nursery school make room for more literacy-related activities, like reading aloud. Finally, in 1986, Fagan and Hayden tried to analyze book interactions between parent and child to study how they could relate to future success in school. They found that story reading was conducive to concept development, especially when interaction between the child and the reader took place.

At the same time the above researchers were explaining and extending Durkin and Clark's research, another group of researchers was applying it to see if it would directly benefit children. Some researchers studied the effects of reading aloud on children already in school and found tested scores rose significantly in each case. Cohen in 1968 found the test scores of second graders who were read to daily improved over the scores of a control group, which was not read to, in the areas of vocabulary, word knowledge, quality of vocabulary and reading comprehension. Several of the researchers (Porter 1969, Weidner 1976, Feitelson and Goldstein 1986) noted a gain in reading comprehension after a reading aloud treatment, as well as significant increases in other language arts scores and in reading interest.

In 1974 Haskett and Lenfestey demonstrated that the model of an adult reading aloud immediately attracted listeners and later imitators while merely making books available in the classroom, and even introducing (but not naming) additional books as "new books", did not stimulate children to look at the books. Raftery studied the effect of education students reading to second graders. Since the children who were read to showed significant gains over the control group, she recommended using education students in the classroom to read aloud, freeing the teacher for other tasks, and developing the reading aloud abilities of the undergraduate education students. In one of the very few studies aimed at improving oral reading, Lamme in 1976 attempted to identify factors which correlated with quality oral reading as an aid to teachers, librarians and parents who might choose to read aloud to their children. Finally, Hooper and Hare attempted to see if reading aloud could be a successful method for teaching content materials in areas such as social atudies and science. They found that not only did the subjects do significantly better than the control group, but they expressed enthusiasm for the read-aloud program.

A second group of researchers applied Durkin and Clark's research by teaching parents to read aloud at home. Highberger and Brooks and also Burgess worked with parents of preschoolers. Both used control/experimental groups and both found the experimental groups exhibited statistically significant gains over the control groups after the parents were trained to read aloud to their preschoolers.

Two studies of parents reading aloud to infants were reported. Lamme and Packer found that even infants react in a consistent, positive way to oral book reading and developed guidelines of expectations for parents to guide them when they read to their infants. Resnick also studied parents reading to infants in order to develop a diagnostic tool for rating parental reading actions. She felt parents who obtained low scores could be taught more productive oral reading behaviors.

Lengyel and Baghban reported the only study of a public school which tried to systematically share the results of Durkin and Clark's research with the parents of its students which was reported as a study. The results indicated that tested language arts scores improved for those being read to at home and that those being read to liked reading and SSR better than nonparticipants

A third area in which the research has been applied has been in teaching providers of preschool and after school child care the value of reading aloud to young children with the message that it should be part of the care activities. Durkin set up an experimental program to make readiness activities available for four year olds in a special two-year kindergarten program. Although the readiness activities were not taught unless requested by a child, all the children were read to and about half were reading when they entered first grade. They maintained an advantage over their peers through fourth grade when the study ended. Howell and Sylvester reported the results of a study of a neighborhood center's after-school reading program while Prater and others reported that at least some of the parents of children in day care knew of the benefits of reading aloud but that these children spend very little waking time at home. She recommended reading aloud as an important function of child care centers.

Three researchers reported on the value of reading a book more than once. They concluded that, particularly very young, children needed and wanted repeated readings so that they could fill in gaps of understanding by commenting and questioning and

that repeated readings were necessary before young children could begin to use the book language in their own speech. Feitelson ("Patterns of Book Ownership") also noted that school oriented families whose children did well in school valued repeated oral reading of books.

Although several of the previously discussed studies reported affective comments by parents and children as an additional benefit of their studies (Weidner 1976, Hooper 1982, Feitelson December 1986, Burgess 1982, and Howell and Sylvester 1983), four studies were done in the affective domain. Mason and Blanton, Bruckhoff and Mendoza all found that children from preschoolers through high school age liked being read aloud to and felt it contributed to their reading competence. The Berg-Crosses found that a single reading of a story book that expressed values could result in statistically significant changes in attitudes. The message of these studies was that reading aloud by adults to children was a powerful educational tool.

The literature describing studies of adults reading aloud to children provided several recurrent findings. The first was that correlational links have been established between adults reading aloud to children and success in school as measured on

a variety of language arts (but not I.Q) tests. A related finding was that exposure to oral language did not correlate strongly with success in school. Storybook language was found to be different from oral and television language which did not appear to be correlated with success in the elementary school.

Another recurrent finding was that correlational links have been established between frequent teacher reading aloud to children in the elementary grades and improved performance on a variety of language arts related achievement tests. Parents reacted positively to programs designed to teach them to read aloud to their children and their children's test scores improved significantly after they were read to on a frequent, regular basis. In addition, statistically significant improvement in language arts test scores have been attained by children whose preschool or day care programs provided stories read aloud as part of the program.

Two final related findings were that young children seemed to want to have a book read more than once and their verbal responses to the book and their depth of understanding of the book increased as the number of times the book was read aloud increased. Finally, children from preschool age to grade twelve

overwhelmingly answered affirmatively when asked if they liked to be read aloud to by adults. While reading aloud may not be said to cause success in school, there was a large body of research which, over a thirty year period, has shown that adults reading aloud to children was related to the children's achievement in reading, to the children's interest in reading and to the children's success in school.

CONCLUSION

Earlier in this study, it was said that educators needed reliable data regarding effective, efficient ways of teaching every child to read. The studies reported in this bibliography pointed to reading aloud to children as an effective way of teaching reading. When this study was begun, it was expected from preliminary research that much of the literature relating to adults reading aloud to children would report positive results; that is, that reading aloud correlated significantly with success in school, with reading achievement and with reading interest. Unexpected, however, was the total preponderance of positive results. In the studies of early readers, the relationship between early reading and being read aloud to was 100 percent. In studies where a group was pretested, read to and then posttested and the results compared to a control group, the results were always positive. Despite the fact that this research may represent only the finest in the field, it is so predominantly positive that it must be said to support the conclusion that reading aloud to children was a very effective tool for helping them achieve success in school, improve their reading ability and increase their interest in reading.

Because educators have only a limited time to work with children, the effective tool must also be an efficient one. Reading aloud by adults to children has been found to be a group activity, one that is effective when done in a grouping, unlike many procedures which are most effective in a one-on-one situation. It is not age-dependent, nor does the group need to be ability divided. All children from the best readers to the non-readers have been found to benefit from adults reading aloud to them. Such versatility has been supported by the research and has lead to the conclusion that reading aloud to children is efficient as well as effective.

Teachers have often been in a position to affect parent effectiveness through parent-teacher conferences. The research in this paper supported the conclusion that teachers should recommend that parents read aloud to their children. Some parents have viewed telvision as the ultimate language teaching tool. When encouraged to read aloud to her child, one mother queried, "Why should I? Watching video is much less trouble and also more modern" (Feitelson, "Effects of Listening to Series Stories," 342). It has been shown by the research that television and other oral language sources were not the same

as written language and simply did not have the effect on success in school and reading ability that listening to stories read aloud did. Teachers have been provided with research to encourage parents to read aloud to their children as an effective way to improve the children's achievement in school.

Finally, it was hoped that this body of research would result in fewer teachers being afraid to read to children. Throughout the literature there were repeated instances of teachers reporting that reading aloud was too much fun to be a teaching tool. "Teachers read aloud to their students, feeling guilty about taking time from their 'teaching' to do something that is so much fun" (Butler 882). "When time has been limited, reading aloud to children has often been overlooked in favor of other activities. Preference has been given to instructional procedures which are believed to promote measurable academic achievement" (McCormick 143). The research has established that reading aloud to children is both effective and efficient in helping children achieve success in school, improvement in reading achievement and interest in reading. Not only do teachers like to read aloud, the research showed that children

overwhelmingly liked being read aloud to, even at the upper primary level (grades four through six). Therefore, since reading aloud to children has been found to be effective and efficient and liked by both teachers and children, it has been concluded that it should be included as part of the instructional program in elementary schools at all levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While reading aloud may not be said to cause success in school, it has been shown (1) that it is related to it and (2) that children like it, whether done at home or at school. It is therefore recommended that:

1. Reading aloud by adults be made part of each elementary school day.
2. Each school system prepare a plan to train, evaluate and schedule students who volunteer to read to younger pupils.
3. Reading aloud workshops be made available to the parents of all children in each elementary school during each school year.
4. Information about how and what to read aloud and the opportunity to practice with groups of children be made part of teacher education and certification programs.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

I. Name: Kay Radecki

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III. Educational Background:
- A. Undergraduate
  1. Kalamazoo College
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IV. Related Employment Experience
- A. 1975-1984 School library volunteer and substitute, South Bend Community School Corporation
- B. 1984-1986 School library paraprofessional, South Bend Community School Corporation
- C. 1986- Elementary school librarian, South Bend Community School Corporation (Jefferson and McKinley)

V. Qualifications:
- A. Educational Background
- B. Employment Experience

VI. Reasons for Interest:
- A. Accountability: A large part of my program consists of reading aloud to children. I would like to know specific areas in which I am contributing to a sound education and a literate, articulate future adult.
- B. Teacher Interaction: I would like specific, researched rebuttal to two teacher statements made to me at least once at both schools in the past year:
  1. "Reading aloud is so much fun I feel guilty taking time for it."
  2. "With all the other things we have to cover, I don't have time to read aloud to them" (or schedule a time for it in the library.)
- C. Parental Interaction: I work closely with nearly twenty parent volunteers and am occasionally asked to speak to groups of parents about children and reading. One of my themes is reading aloud and I would like to know as much about the research as possible when I tell busy parents that read aloud time is quality time.
- D. Personal Satisfaction and Curiosity: I feel reading aloud is important; I have read in a textbook that it is important; I want to know from the research that reading aloud to others justifies being given precious, limited instructional time.